

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SOFIA 000007

SIPDIS

STATE FOR ECA/PE - AROMANOWSKI, ECA/PE/C - KPEREZ, EUR/PD - VWALKER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EOXC](#) [SCUL](#) [EUR](#) [KPAO](#)

SUBJECT: REINVIGORATIONG PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CULTURAL AND SPORTS PROGRAMS

REFERENCE: STATE 222516

[1](#)1. Post has not worked with sports programs. Our answers concern only cultural programming.

[1](#)A. Which of your mission objectives benefits from cultural programs or could be better supported by cultural programs, including sports programs? Please be specific in describing how these programs support your objectives. For example: do they create an event that gets embassy access To otherwise inaccessible audiences, build direct public Support for U.S. policy objectives, or challenge and change negative public opinion or stereotypes that thwart U.S. interests?

Our major policy goal is winning Bulgarian support for shared Bulgarian-American military facilities and for greater Bulgarian participation in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as greater cooperation between the U.S. and Bulgaria on a wide range of security and economic issues. Achievement of this goal is hindered by a lack of understanding of the United States, based in large part upon stereotypes and images of America created by Hollywood films and television programs. Cultural programs which show American values of individualism, tolerance, ethnic diversity, trust in the rule of law, and the importance of faith and family help break down these stereotypes, and show the Bulgarian audience that our essential values and goals are very similar.

[1](#)B. The most effective programs are those that stress traditional American values and music, which resonate in a deeply traditional society. These include concert programs of jazz, blues, gospel, and country music.

A second important area for cultural programming is film - presenting new independent American films at Bulgarian film festivals, to show that the American cinema is much richer and diverse than its popular image.

A third important area for programming, in a country which deeply respects language and literature, is inviting prominent or rising American writers and poets to visit Bulgarian universities. Knowledge of American literature is largely limited to writers from the 1930s or 1940s, or the books of Dan Brown. Book translations of recent American literature would reach a wide and appreciative audience.

A fourth important area for programming is cultural preservation, which shows respect for the rich history of Bulgaria, through grants by the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation and establishing linkages between American and Bulgarian archeological and historical museums.

[1](#)C. Some cultural programs, such as classical musical performances, have a more limited impact.

[1](#)D. The six jazz festivals in Bulgaria are willing and eager to have American performers - film festivals are seeking American films, and publishers want American books. Small funding in these areas brings large audiences and valuable good will.

Levine